SMOC
South Middlesex Opportunity Council, Inc.

Annual Report 2007

ORGANIZING RESOURCES FOR SOCIAL CHANGE
AND ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE
SMOC: South Middlesex Opportunity Council

Organizing Resources for Social Change and Economic Independence

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South Middlesex Opportunity Council

Annual Report 2007

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On behalf of the South Middlesex Opportunity Council’s Board of Directors and Staff, I’m pleased to present our 41st Annual Report of the quality programs and services which we provide to thousands of families and individuals in the greater MetroWest and Worcester regions.

The people of our regions should continue to be impressed with the broad array of services that we are able to provide to economically disadvantaged individuals and families. We should be particularly proud this year of the work that we have done to end homelessness in the regions we serve. We celebrate this year the single accomplishment of closing the Common Ground emergency overnight shelter in downtown Framingham and replacing it with housing opportunities enhanced by services that will move formerly homeless individuals to successful independent living. This work presents a new and bold model of providing critical services to homeless people with the goal of ending emergency shelter that had unfortunately become a way of life for too many of our fellow residents. This new important work is being carried out at our new Common Ground Resource Center and we look forward to hearing more about its progress in the year ahead. We are also about to undertake a similarly exciting new initiative on the family side that shows great promise for new ways to prevent family homelessness and sustain families in their homes.

SMOC’s fine work continues on many fronts but not without the struggle that comes with providing services to needy populations. We are all challenged to recognize that combating poverty, homelessness, drug and alcohol addiction, mental illness, lack of education, lack of employment and many other social ills requires strong community and state partnerships to marshal the resources necessary to correct these social ills. The most important element of these partnerships is leadership on the part of all of those who have a stake in the outcome. State government, legislative leaders, the community, local elected officials, other providers, faith based organizations, neighborhood people of good will and many others have important roles to play in seeking positive outcomes in our fight against poverty and discrimination. It is disappointing that there has been so little leadership evident on these fronts in this past year as we have sought to expand the reach of critical programs that benefit so many people and communities. We must continue to strive to reach out to engage people of good will to positive action in the face of ugly rhetoric by a few detractors and the pandering to fear that has been substituted for good government in the body politic.

We will withstand the pressure on us to turn our backs on people in need and will continue on as we always have to help people to move forward in their personal lives. I am again pleased to have this opportunity to thank my fellow Board members and all of the SMOC staff and volunteers for the time and work they have contributed to making our mission a reality. Your dedication and commitment to our stated goals to continue advocating for positive change is greatly admired and appreciated.
Executive Director’s Message

Jim Cuddy, Executive Director

My annual message has a number of positive things to report on, and it also contains a number of difficult, not so positive, matters. Let’s start with the positive.

Last year saw the successful implementation of Phase I of a three-part plan to end single adult homelessness in the Metrowest region of the Commonwealth. The staff came together and worked extremely hard to put together a plan that led to the closing of the Common Ground Overflow Shelter and the opening of the Common Ground Resource Center. We have reduced homelessness in the Metrowest area by 60%. Our partners included the State, other funders, the MetroWest Community Health Care Foundation, the United Way and local financial institutions. The staff made it happen and a lot of people’s lives are better because of it.

Last year was also marked by our successful efforts to reduce the census of homeless individuals at the PIP shelter in Worcester. We have created a regional continuum and, during last year, we were successful in opening three supportive housing facilities within Worcester, and a number of facilities outside the City. It wasn’t easy, the community siting issues were intense and sometimes extremely unpleasant. But, in the end, we were successful. The buildings opened, homeless people moved into them and are now leading far more satisfying and productive lives. The shelter staff, the development staff and the Housing staff -- working with our attorneys at Bowditch & Dewey -- made it happen. Kudos to all of them!

There are a lot of other positive developments that I will just touch on briefly. The Natick Housing Corporation became a part of us. Ready, Willing & Able, our work program to help single adults become self-sufficient, was launched in February and is off to a great start. Behavioral Health Services enhanced the collaboration with the newly-formed Framingham Health Center. We established one of the only statewide pilot programs for youths aging out of the DYS and DSS systems. And the work that we do continued every day -- whether that work was helping somebody get Fuel Assistance, Rental Assistance or WIC, intervening in domestic violence situations, serving meals through Elderly Nutrition, educating and taking care of young children -- the work continued, done very well and, most importantly, with heart.

It’s good to come to work in the morning when I think of who works for us and who is involved with us. I know that the people we have working for us make a difference in the lives of others.

Now let’s turn to a more difficult subject.

For the past two years, SMOC has been the target of elected and appointed officials in the Town of Framingham, aided and abetted by a small group of “self-appointed community leaders.” They have engaged in a pervasive pattern of civil rights violations against disabled people and our organization. Their aim is not simply to stop one program of SMOC. Their aim, frankly, is to destroy the soul and the culture of our organization. These elected and appointed officials, acting in concert with these “self-appointed community leaders,” have created a poisonous atmosphere. We believe that they have violated many laws in so doing.

At the end of FY’07 the Board, over a series of months, made the difficult decision to say no, to stand up and take action against the Town, its officials and these “self-appointed community leaders.” They will not be
actions that we take lightly. They will not be actions that give us any pleasure. But they are necessary. People have the fundamental right to live where they choose. Our organization has spent 40 years working to help people achieve economic and social self-sufficiency. We will not stand by idly and let that work be threatened or destroyed. It is incumbent on us to take action to stop this pervasive pattern of illegal activities, and we will do so.

Let me end by providing one anecdote to lighten the intensity of these words. Recently, we had a Management Council meeting to discuss these matters. It was a good and thorough discussion and, near the end, Margaret Davitt, who had been quiet during the whole meeting, addressed me but was speaking to the group, and said, "You know, Jim, they were doing this 40 years ago when we were simply trying to work with Head Start parents. There were people upset that we were working with poor people. All that's happened now is that there are more poor people, and we're able to do a lot more to help them. So this isn't anything new and it's good that we're fighting back."

Amen, Margaret.

SMOC’S MISSION

SMOC’s mission is to improve the quality of life of low-income and disadvantaged individuals and families by advocating for their needs and rights; providing services; educating the community; building a community of support; participating in coalitions with other advocates and searching for new resources and partnerships.
Programs and Highlights

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

OUTPATIENT SERVICES: Outpatient clinics operate in Framingham and Marlboro and provide individual treatment, group treatment, medication management and consultation services to persons with mental health needs. For additional information, call (508) 879-2250

FAMILY AND CHILD SERVICES: Provides specialized counseling services for SMOC family programs and the community, including family stabilization services for the Department of Social Services. For additional information, call (508) 879-2250

MENTAL HEALTH RESIDENTIAL SERVICES: With six residential programs and a number of supported apartments, chronically mentally ill persons are provided with the support that they need to live successfully in the community. All referrals to the program come from the Department of Mental Health. For additional information, call (508) 879-2250

COMMUNITY REHABILITATIVE SERVICES (CRS): Program provides DMH consumers a broad range of case management support services that assist them in living independently in the community. For additional information, call (508) 879-2250.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE SERVICES

OUTPATIENT SERVICES: An outpatient clinic program that provides evaluation, individual and group counseling, and community education services. For additional information, call (508) 879-2250.

DRIVER ALCOHOL EDUCATION (DAE): Part of the regional court-ordered program for first offenders for driving under the influence and second offenders following a 14-day inpatient program. SMOC DAE is a six-month program providing individual and group counseling, education, and evaluation. For additional information, call (508) 879-2250.

YOUNG ADULT SUPPORTED CASE MANAGEMENT and HOUSING PROGRAM: This supported housing program serves young adults ages 18 to 25 that are homeless or at risk of homelessness and facing the challenges of recovery. Housing is supported with intensive case management and clinical support. For additional information, call 508-879-4057

SAGE HOUSE: This congregate family setting provides intensive, six to nine month residential treatment, and counseling for homeless families facing the challenges of living in recovery. For additional information, call (508) 626-2586.

According to the 2007 Bureau of Substance Abuse Services Site Visit Report, the Sage House completion rate increased from 43% in 2006 to 83%. The state average is just 38%.
SERENITY HOUSE: This program provides a six-month residential substance abuse treatment and counseling program for up to 35 women, age 18 and older. Services are available to pregnant and post-partum women also. Vocational training and placement, parenting, and eating disorder components are also included. For additional information, call (508) 435-9040.

MEADOWS: A transitional supportive housing program for women leaving MCI/Framingham and other correctional facilities throughout the state, the program provides transitional housing, substance abuse treatment and educational and vocational training. For additional information, call (508) 231-4516.

NEW BEGINNINGS: A supportive housing program for homeless individuals living with HIV/AIDS, New Beginnings provides case management, advocacy and supportive services that allow individuals with HIV/AIDS to continue living independently and with dignity. For additional information, call (508) 370-3573

CHILD CARE / HEAD START

HEAD START: SMOC Head Start is a comprehensive community based program for three and four year olds and their families. This pre-school program provides services in early education, health and dental care, mental health, nutrition and social services. Transportation is provided in some communities. Head Start services are provided in the towns of Ashland, Framingham, Grafton, Hudson, Marlboro, Medway, Milford, Natick, and Northbridge. Low-income eligibility with priority given for special needs children. The main center is located in Framingham. For additional information, call (508) 820-8380.

CHILD CARE: SMOC Child Care serves children ages 1 month to 12 years, with centers located in Framingham, Marlborough and Hudson and a system of supervised Family Childcare Homes located in the Framingham/Marlboro area. Subsidies with sliding-scale parent fees are available to parents who are employed or pursuing training/education opportunities. The programs provide healthy, safe, and nurturing environments that are conducive to learning and personal growth. Programs emphasize the individuality of each child, a positive self-image, and the strengthening of family relationships. Child care is also provided for families who are referred by the Department of Social Services. For additional information, call (508) 820-8380.

CRISIS INTERVENTION

VOICES AGAINST VIOLENCE: Voices provides counseling and advocacy to battered individuals, sexual assault survivors, and their families. These services include a 24-hour hotline, crisis intervention and short term counseling, legal advocacy, support groups, assistance with hospital and police procedures, confidential domestic violence shelter services, supervised visitation, information and referral. All services are confidential and provided free of charge*. In addition, Voices conducts community education and training programs. Community based services office, call (508) 820-0834; 24-hour hotlines: 1-800-593-1125 or (508) 626-8686. English, Spanish, and Portuguese are spoken. TTY services are available 24 hours a day.

*sliding scale fees apply to supervised visitation services
WOMEN’S TRANSITION PROGRAM: Designed to help women establish strong foundations for social change and economic independence. This program offers comprehensive case management services to women who have had recent criminal justice involvement in order to help them successfully transition to the community. Participants meet with a case manager to set goals and design an individual service plan. Each individual service plan focuses on the woman’s strengths and a comprehensive array of services provided by the SMOC continuum in the form of education, employment, housing, social and health services. Funding is provided by the Massachusetts Department of Correction. For additional information, call (508) 620-2353.

FRESH START: This program provides a four month rental subsidy and case management services for men and women releasing from correctional facilities. National studies indicate that housing is a critical factor in reducing recidivism. This program offers participants an opportunity to “get back on their feet.” Participants have four months to secure employment and save up enough money to be able to pay rent on their own. The Fresh Start Program is funded by the Massachusetts Parole Board and operates in Framingham, Worcester and Lawrence. For additional information, call (508) 620-2321.

RE-ENTRY HOUSING PROGRAM: The Re-entry Housing Program is a statewide homeless prevention program funded by the Massachusetts Department of Correction. SMOC Housing Specialists located in Boston, Springfield, Worcester, Lowell and Fall River provide pre-release housing search assistance to individuals in DOC custody who have been identified by the DOC as being at risk for becoming homeless. Upon release, program participants may continue to receive housing search assistance for up to a year in order to secure permanent stable housing. National studies indicate that housing is a critical factor in reducing recidivism. For additional information, call (508) 620-2353.

NCSO RE-ENTRY PROGRAM: This program provides a comprehensive schedule of re-entry classes for inmates residing at the Norfolk County Sheriff’s Office - Dedham Alternative Center. Group instruction focuses on education and skills building to help inmates prepare for a successful re-entry to the community. Areas of focus include substance abuse/recovery, GED preparation, reading/writing, budgeting & financial literacy, job-seeking skills, computer skills, cognitive and behavioral change, parenting, and domestic violence. For additional information, call (508) 620-2676.

Dan released from DOC custody in February of 2006. He had no savings and no place to live but was motivated and willing to work. Due to a seizure disorder that has affected his cognitive abilities, Dan needed assistance with even the most basic needs. His Re-entry Housing Program worker assisted him with shopping and getting settled into an emergency homeless shelter. Once at the shelter, Dan began searching for a job. Although he was eager to secure full-time employment, his seizure disorder kept getting in the way. With help from his RHP Housing Specialist, Dan agreed to apply for social security disability benefits. In the months that followed, Dan began to exhibit symptoms of mental illness and paranoia. He was afraid that the police were following him and became fearful of the staff at the emergency shelter. When Dan received a letter from social security saying that he needed to see a doctor to be evaluated, he decided to withdraw his application for benefits, fearing that if he went for an evaluation, he would be “locked up” in a mental hospital. He continued to look for full-time employment with no success. Dan’s RHP Housing Specialist worked together with the shelter staff and patiently continued to support Dan -- encouraging him to seek help. After nearly 10 months, Dan agreed to see a psychiatrist and get treatment for his mental illness. He became less paranoid and eventually agreed to re-apply for social security benefits and go through the required medical evaluations. Three months later he was approved for social security and got his first check. He also found a part-time job. With steady income, Dan and his RHP Housing Specialist were able to find a an apartment. Now Dan is living on his own. Due to his special circumstances, the RHP continued to work with Dan for more than a year in order to get him into permanent housing. Dan continues to do well as of the writing of this report.
EMployment and Adult Education

MetroWest Career Center: The MetroWest Career Center provides a broad range of career and employment services, public access to the Computer Resource Room, job ready and job search workshops, job postings and other employment search related resources. For additional information, call (508) 620-2677.

Joan Brack Adult Learning Center: Located within the MetroWest Career Center, this initiative offers individuals GED classes in a supportive, educational community that is interactive, fosters cooperative learning and is individualized around the learning style of each student. Complementing the traditional in-class setting is a volunteer mentoring component that matches volunteer tutors to individual students working one-on-one. For additional information, call (508) 620-2632.

Services for Education and Employment (SEE): The SEE Program provides individualized client centered services to assist DMH-eligible persons with severe mental illness to obtain and maintain competitive education and employment. The program emphasizes client choice, rapid job-finding where appropriate, integrated education and work settings, and follow-along support. The SEE staff is part of a multidisciplinary treatment team, where treatment and rehabilitation are integrated and coordinated. Program services are located in Framingham, Marlborough and Waltham. For additional information, call (508) 620-2401.

KEHA Program: The KEHA program is an enhanced SEE program that assists DMH-referred individuals to make a successful transition to the community by providing structured activities and linkages to employment, education, job readiness and career planning services. The program encourages explorations of one's goals and communication skills by providing an environment that fosters building self-confidence, social competency and strength of mind. For additional information, call (508) 620-2401.

Mobile Resource Team: The Mobile Resource Team provides specialized housing and employment search and placement assistance to homeless individuals throughout the state. Individuals referred to the Mobile Outreach Teams can receive services on the Cape, MetroWest, Central and Western Regions of the state. For additional information, call (508) 620-2677.

Young Parents Program: This program helps young parents to pass the GED exam in addition to providing a wide range of services including developing parenting skills, job skills training and employment placement. For additional information, call 508-620-2632.

Serenity Office Skills Program: This program provides a one-month class in job-readiness and basic office skills to low-income women who participate in qualified SMOC residential programs. The program prepares students for entry-level jobs in an office environment. For additional information, call (508) 620-2632.
READY, WILLING AND ABLE: Ready, Willing and Able (RWA) is a temporary labor program with the goal of moving temporary employees into permanent employment. As RWA is fully integrated with SMOC’s shelter, housing and behavioral health programs, it is often a "first step" employment program that allows people the opportunity to engage (or re-engage) with the workplace. For additional information, call (508)620-2482.

ENERGY AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

FUEL ASSISTANCE (LIHEAP): Eligible households in 37 communities receive cash assistance paid directly to their heating vendor. The program assists low-income people afford the cost of heat in the winter months. Income eligible households whose heat is included in the rent may also receive benefits. For additional information, call (508) 620-1230 & 1-800-286-6776.

WEATHERIZATION & HEATING SYSTEM ASSISTANCE: This program provides energy conservation services to low-income households, including energy audits, insulation, weather-stripping, storm windows and caulking. Expanded services available through utility companies’ funding include client education, appliance replacement, and lighting efficiency. Heating system and burner cleaning, tuning, evaluation, repairs, and/or replacement services are also provided. For additional information, call (508) 620-1230 (800) 286-6776.

RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS: Provides rental subsidies to low income families who meet selection requirements in 37 communities. Rental payments are made directly to landlords monthly on behalf of tenants. Each rental unit is inspected annually for compliance to HUD quality standards and Department of Housing and Community Development requirements. The program serves as mediator and liaison between tenants and landlords. For additional information, call (508) 620-2335.

FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY PROGRAM: Provides Section 8 families with access to supportive programming to enhance their self-sufficiency. It is designed to provide support and advocacy around employment opportunities, childcare, parenting, and budgeting skills. For additional information, call (508) 620-2335.

SOUTH MIDDLESEX NON-PROFIT HOUSING CORPORATION

The South Middlesex Non-Profit Housing Corporation addresses the need for decent, safe, affordable housing for low-and-moderate income families, individuals, and disabled adults. The chief mission of the Housing Corporation is to preserve and improve existing affordable housing and to develop new housing choices for low-and-moderate income residents. SMOC’s Housing Corporation demonstrates a comprehensive and creative approach to regional housing needs by integrating human services within the housing units for individuals and families.

The Housing Corporation owns, develops and manages the agency’s housing portfolio including residential, program and commercial properties. Community development activities focus on efforts to expand economic opportunity, redevelop substandard and distressed properties, enhance participation in community stabilization and partnerships, and identify opportunities to enhance neighborhoods. SMOC’s housing continuum contains many choices for area residents ranging from emergency shelters, program-supported housing, affordable Single Room Occupancy units and permanent family rental units for individuals and families.

For additional information, call (508) 879-6691.

HOUSING CONTINUUM OF CARE & SERVICES

HOUSING SERVICES CENTER: A multi-service center that provides information and referral to area health, education, housing and social services and links consumers to emergency services where appropriate. For additional information, call (508) 872-0765

HOUSING CONSUMER EDUCATION CENTER: SMOC Housing’s Homeownership Opportunity Initiative provides first time homebuyers counseling and services where individuals receive comprehensive, practical, step by step training on how to prepare for the purchase of a home. This includes regular group sessions and customized individual training combined with ongoing pre-purchase and post-closing technical assistance. The classes serve primarily low-income households throughout Framingham and neighboring MetroWest communities. For additional information, call (508) 620-2675

HOUSING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (HAP): HAP is an assistance program for families in Department of Transitional Assistance-funded emergency shelter programs. Housing specialists work closely with families to secure permanent affordable housing. For additional information, call (508) 872-0765.

HOUSING OPPORTUNITY FOR PEOPLE WITH AIDS (HOPWA): HOPWA assists individuals living with AIDS in the MetroWest community with housing and housing-related matters. Individuals are referred from community agencies, or are self-referred, and work closely with housing specialists to identify appropriate housing opportunities throughout the community that will support their needs. For additional information, call (508) 872-0765.
RENTAL ASSISTANCE TO FAMILIES IN TRANSITION: Provides emergency financial assistance to prevent eviction, foreclosures and utility shut-offs for families that meet eligibility criteria. For additional information, call (508) 620-0765 and/or (508) 620-2675.

MOBILE STABILIZATION PROGRAM: This housing stabilization program in the MetroWest serves recently homeless individuals. Staff provides ongoing support that aims to keep individuals in permanent housing. For additional information, call (508) 620-2624.

HOME MODIFICATION PROGRAM: A loan program that provides low-interest loans to homeowners for access modifications to primary residences of elders, adults with disabilities and families with children with disabilities within 46 communities. For additional information, call (508) 620-2682.

THE COMMON GROUND RESOURCE CENTER: This is the “hub” for services for homeless and, at-risk of becoming homeless, in the MetroWest region. The CGRC staffs case managers, housing coordinators, housing specialists, employment specialists, mental health and substance abuse clinicians, outreach workers, domestic violence specialists, and more. For additional information, call (508) 620-2690.

METROWEST EMERGENCY ADULT SHELTER PROGRAM: SMOC maintains several emergency housing programs in the region for men and women that are all connected to the CGRC. The programs provide safe shelter, some meals and individualized assessment and case management services. The goal of these programs is to find permanent housing for our guests as quickly as possible while wrapping services and supports through the housing continuum. All shelter requests must go through the CGRC at: (508) 620-2690.

WORCESTER EMERGENCY ADULT SHELTER PROGRAM: This program, located in downtown Worcester provides shelter, some meals, case management, health services, housing search, employment search and other supportive services to homeless single adults in the Worcester region. For additional information, call: (508) 757-0103

On October 16th, 2006, SMOC closed the Common Ground Overflow shelter in downtown Framingham. As part one of SMOC’s plan to end homelessness for single adults in the MetroWest area, SMOC took 40 shelter beds off-line and restructured the Housing Continuum to focus on triage and rapid re-housing.

Between January 1st and June 30th, the following outcomes were achieved:

- 824 people with emergency needs were screened, assessed and triaged at the CGRC.
- 304 people were placed into short-term emergency beds in our three single adult shelters located in MetroWest.
- Shelter stays have been reduced from an average of three months to 30 days.
- 136 people were moved into supportive health service-enriched first-step housing, where they receive regular case management services to support them in the achievement of the goals set in their individual self sufficiency plans.
- 98 people were placed directly into sober or transitional housing or treatment.
- 20 people moved from 1st step housing to sober or permanent housing or further treatment.
FAMILY SHELTER PROGRAM: SMOC maintains three congregate family shelters as well as a scattered site shelter for homeless families, referred from the Department of Transitional Assistance. Staff assists families in acquiring permanent, affordable housing, as well as medical, education, vocational, and social services. For additional information, call the Housing Services Center at (508) 875-0765.

SOBER HOUSING: SMOC operates sober housing for single adults who are in the process of recovery. A structured program provides a supportive environment for tenants, thereby enhancing their possibility of continued recovery and increased self-sufficiency. For additional information, call (508) 879-6691.

FIRST STEP SUPPORTIVE HOUSING: First-step housing provides enriched services in a residential setting for recently homeless individuals. In the MetroWest region, contact the Common Ground Resource Center at (508) 620-2690 and in Worcester contact, (508) 757-0103 for additional information.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

MARLBORO RESOURCE CENTER: The Resource Center provides information, referral, and advocacy to residents of Marlboro, Hudson, and surrounding communities. Landlord/tenant and affordable housing information is available. The Center also serves as the contact for the Salvation Army for Marlboro. For additional information, call (508) 460-9699.

METROWEST HELPLINE: A general information and referral service. An information specialist is available Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. The Helpline has listings for over 450 social service resources. There are no income or geographical limits. For additional information, call 1-800-724-7662.

RUSSIAN OUTREACH PROJECT: Provides information & referral, outreach and advocacy to Russian immigrants to MetroWest. For additional information, call (508) 872-0765.

ORGANIZATION FOR PORTUGUESE AMERICAN IMMIGRANTS: Provides information, referral, outreach and advocacy to Portuguese-speaking immigrants in Marlboro and Hudson. For additional information, call (978) 562-3082.

NUTRITION

WIC PROGRAM: Women, Infants and Children (WIC) provides free food and nutrition education to help keep pregnant women, infants and children under five healthy. Participants in the program receive nutrition counseling, referrals to other services and WIC checks to purchase nutritious foods and infant formula. SMOC has WIC sites in Framingham, Marlboro, Maynard and Waltham. Anyone who lives in

Each year, nearly 6,000 households improve infant and child health and physical development as a result of adequate nutrition through the WIC program.

At the age of 42, I realized that it was time I grew up. I do struggle some days from feelings of the wreckage of the past. I have grown into a woman who realized today that I do belong, and I have honor, dignity, and pride. My plans after I leave sober housing would be to continue on the road I am on now and be a part of society instead of a menace to it. This way of life is all possible to me because of SMOC and their caring and understanding staff. - Cheryl

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Massachusetts may apply by calling the main site: 508-620-1445.

WIC ON WHEELS: This mobile van offers the full range of WIC program services plus basic health services to sites in Acton, Hopkinton, Hudson, Natick, Needham, Waltham, Wellesley and Westboro. Anyone who lives in Massachusetts may apply by calling 781-775-5867 or the main site: 508-620-1445.

ELDERLY NUTRITION: The Elderly Nutrition Program furnishes over 140,000 home-delivered meals per year in 14 towns of the MetroWest area: Ashland, Dover, Framingham, Holliston, Hopkinton, Marlboro, Natick, Northboro, Sherborn, Southboro, Sudbury, Wayland and Westboro. Group or congregate meals are served in most of these localities. For additional information, call (508) 872-6570 or 872-6579.

METROWEST HARVEST: The MetroWest Harvest Project encompasses several efforts that are designed to bring more food resources into the MetroWest area to assist low-income people. These include: rescuing perishable food from local restaurants, caterers, etc., operating a food pantry in Framingham; and, serving as a drop site for the Boston Food Bank. The project relies extensively on volunteer assistance. For additional information, call (508) 872-6570 or 872-6579.

SUMMER FOOD PROGRAM: Provides good and nutritious meals during the summer for all children in five camp or school sites in Framingham and Marlboro. For additional information, call (508) 872-6570 or 872-6579.
Awards

Frederick Rubin Board Member of the Year Award
RONALD ORDWAY

This year we are proud and pleased to honor Ronald Ordway as Board Member of the Year for his tremendous contribution to the agency as a member who has dedicated his entire adult life to promoting the well being of the people of our communities in public, private, charitable and civic endeavors. Ron Ordway is the ultimate role model for community leadership.

Ron is greatly admired and respected in his hometown of Natick for his selfless expenditure of time and irrepressible energy on behalf of the community as a whole but in particular for his caring and concern for people in need. Whether serving on various town boards and agencies over the last 40 years, donating blood to the Red Cross (Ron and his wife Nora have each donated over 20 gallons) or volunteering his services in the National Silver Haired Legislature, Ron has always looked out for the best interests of those who might otherwise not have a voice in the corridors of power. It is indeed fitting that the Town of Natick dedicated its 2006 Annual Report to Ron on behalf of all of its citizens.

Ron Ordway brought his many talents to the SMOC Board with the conviction that he would be able to continue his work on behalf of disadvantaged individuals and families by offering advice and counsel to the agency in addition to rolling up his sleeves and providing hands-on assistance in the work we do. He provided great assistance to the elders of our communities by volunteering for the Meals on Wheels program and served ably as a member of the Elderly Nutrition Program Council. Ron’s thoughtful, concise and well-received commentary as a Board member over the years has improved and enhanced the work of the agency and its programs.

The Board of Directors, the agency as a whole, the town of Natick and all of our communities are so very fortunate to have such an accomplished friend as Ron Ordway on the Board. With gratitude and great pride, we honor Ronald Ordway as the Board Member of the Year for 2007.

Employees of the Year
Nilsa Roman and Cheryl Libby

Nilsa Roman is the face of SMOC at the Marlboro Resource Center and has for over 13 years worked hard providing an array of services to the people of the Marlboro area. Among many tasks, Nilsa provides Housing Assistance Program (HAP) services to people sent to us by the Department of Transitional Assistance, takes fuel assistance applications and works with the city to administer the holiday toy drive – carrying out all of this hard with a friendly and positive attitude.

Handling over 60 cases at any given point in time through the HAP program, Nilsa is a tremendous advocate for those seeking housing and has an enviable track record of placing people into permanent housing and preventing many tenancy terminations. In addition, Nilsa is the point person for a small grant program operated under the auspices of the Salvation Army that preserves housing by providing financial assistance for rent arrearage and to avoid utility shut-off.
Nilsa is a team player who goes above and beyond to help program participants, her peers and her supervisors. Nilsa volunteers to take on additional tasks to help the team. Nilsa works hands on with clients of FEMA and RAFT and ensures the process is friendly and efficient.

Nilsa is greatly respected by coworkers, supervisors and program participants as a caring and thoughtful professional and shows her respect for all of them in return. Working closely with the City of Marlborough's Human Services Department, Nilsa represents SMOC well and is valued by the city as a tremendous community asset.

Nilsa is the kind of employee who brings great credit to the organization in the eyes of the community at large and whose dedication to helping people is clearly evident in her everyday work. We are pleased to honor Nilsa as “Employee of the Year.”

Cheryl Libby, the Behavioral Health Services (BHS) Office Supervisor, goes the extra mile each day to ensure that the people who come to receive quality services delivered in a respectful and efficient environment. Cheryl provides excellent training and guidance to the staff in terms of communicating with a challenging clientele.

Cheryl knows every person on the staff and understands the particular responsibilities of each one. As she works with staff, Cheryl ensures that they are able to distinguish routine from emergency situations that they respond quickly and appropriately to medical or clinical emergencies and that they conduct themselves in a way that ensures a professional and courteous office demeanor at all times.

Cheryl is always willing to do what is needed to get the job done, whether or not it is a part of her job description and takes time out of her own incredibly busy schedule to assist other staff or clients. Cheryl is very accommodating about her schedule and this flexibility is a great assist to the whole office.

Cheryl's work ethic is admired by her coworkers and her easygoing manner and willingness to help out in all situations, including taking on extra work and longer hours, is greatly appreciated by all. Cheryl is well liked and well respected by her staff, coworkers and supervisors.

Cheryl tackles every assignment with great professionalism. Recently, the clinic has had to implement many new or revised procedures for billing, privacy protection and clinical practice. Cheryl handled these new requirements with great diligence and trained staff to ensure that the clinic would successfully implement these new state and federal mandates.

As important as Cheryl's official duties are, Cheryl is often called upon to make important decisions affecting the operations of the clinic because of her well-known experience and reputation for exercising good judgment, particularly in crisis situations.

Cheryl has worked for the agency over 9 years and arrives every morning eager to accomplish a day's work. Cheryl is an exemplary employee whose dedication to her coworkers and to BHS and SMOC has earned her our recognition as “Employee of the Year.”

Managers of the Year
Matilde Medina and Kelley Doel

Matilde Medina, is the Scattered Site Program Manager. She has worked at SMOC for 16 years and has been a manager for four years. Matilde is a very dedicated, caring and conscientious employee. She juggles many
responsibilities and demands effectively and gracefully. She has an extremely positive attitude and is encouraging to her staff and the people around her. Despite the many demands of her own job, she always has time to talk to the staff or clients to provide support and figure out solutions to problems. She is always willing to take on new tasks and challenges with a smile.

As the Program Manager, Matilde is always looking to help her staff grow professionally and has been supportive of their effort to acquire and develop new skills. She is always accessible to staff – without hesitation. Matilde works with everyone – whether it is to encourage them to take on further responsibility or to train someone from the very start. She welcomes clients to come and talk with her any time to discuss any issues or problems that have. Matilde is very committed to her staff and the clients in the program and is very highly respected by both.

Matilde works as part of the Family Shelter Team and with her Scattered Site Family Shelter Team. She is insightful, flexible and a great team player. Her many years as a Housing Advocate make her a valuable resource for the team and she is often called upon to offer technical assistance around best strategies in working with challenging families.

Matilde’s staff would describe her as someone they can look up to, be inspired by, and as a role model. She has a great sense of humor and uses it appropriately to lighten tense situations or to make people smile through a difficult day.

Under Matilde’s leadership, the Scattered Sites program expanded from 28 to 46 units with all units becoming fully furnished and programmatically enriched. SMOC is delighted to recognize Matilde as “Manager of the Year” for all that she has done for homeless families in the region.

Kelley Doel, is the Director of Operations in the Economic Development Department where she has worked for the past twelve years. Kelley has a calm demeanor that exudes confidence, thoughtfulness and rationality. She is an excellent listener, is able to break a problem down and is skilled at helping staff identify alternate solutions. Kelley also brings fairness to her management style. Time and again, she exhibits skills as a personnel manager, helping staff set goals and working with them to achieve those goals by setting interim steps, working with them when they struggle by providing ideas and examples. She promotes an environment that values staff and works closely with staff to help them grow.

Kelley is always supportive of her entire staff – on-site and off-site. She helps those that are struggling and nurtures those are more self-directed. She also interacts with clients – getting involved in their particular situation to both help her better understand their plight as well as learning how to improve service delivery. All the while, she genuinely appreciates the challenges that they face and the success that they accomplish.

Under Kelley’s leadership, the Economic Development Division has grown and flourished. Due partly to her efforts, the SEE program has become DMH’s show case that has led most recently to the Westat study and the Food Stamp Pilot. She has nurtured our criminal justice programs and provided critical assistance and support to the Mobile Resource Team and the SEE and Keha programs and provided overall support to all economic development programming. She has also been a key player in many agency-wide initiatives including a centralized data system, the web site, and integrating trauma-informed services throughout all of SMOC.

Kelley is a strong leader – helping staff with everything from site reviews to reporting to program support. In general, he staff look to her for guidance and support on any and all issues that come along. Her staff describes Kelley as supportive, understanding, patient, fair, practical, caring, professional, knowledgeable and accessible. Kelley epitomizes the Agency’s values and we are honored to recognize her as “Manager of the Year.”
Isabel Harrison Volunteer of the Year Award
Len Dalton, Mike Dineen and Leona Dalton

Len Dalton and Mike Dineen are full time volunteers and lead the MetroWest Outreach Connection, a non-profit 501 C3 charitable organization that provides housing resources for homeless and at risk for homelessness populations. The Connection has assisted scores of families and individuals obtain the financial resources to prevent homelessness or to move from emergency shelter to housing. Len and Mike are tireless in their pursuit of funds to support this charitable work and their busy weekly schedules attest to many hours of research, assessing needs, proposal writing, writing thank you letters, reviewing applications, responding to phone calls, going to classes on how to write proposals, data collecting, accounting, searching for new sources of funding and many other activities. Mike and Len also took the lead in applying for a grant that they will partner with Voices Against Violence in providing a housing resource called “Health Through Housing” for individuals and/or families experiencing domestic violence.

The genesis for the Homeless Prevention Program was formed in October 2001 when SMOC engaged the larger community about the plight of families living in motels. A number of volunteers became involved in supporting homeless families that were housed in local motels and in June, 2002, MetroWest Outreach Connection Inc. (MWOC) began a Homeless Support Program to assist these families with food and other essential items to help them through their crises. After the motel emergency abated, MWOC decided to remain involved and assist families in homeless prevention and reacquisition of housing for those who are homeless. Thus, Len Dalton, and Mike Dineen did the necessary groundwork to incorporate and in March of 2003, MWOC became a 501 C 3 non-profit organization in March 2004.

Over the last three years, MWOC has provided financial assistance to 885 low-income people including 227 families with a total of 437 children. Since the Homeless Prevention Program commenced on August 2, 2004, MWOC has raised approximately $330,000 from over 40 grants and donations. Their 2006 Walk to Prevent Homelessness raised fifty percent more than previous years. Very few of these dollars are spent on administration - nearly 97% of all funds raised are spent to help these low-income clients. Funds are paid directly to landlords or mortgage companies.

Mike and Len provide great leadership at MWOC and have developed a great team of people dedicated to improving the lives of people who would otherwise become or remain homeless. Brother Charles Moran from Catholic Charities assists with reviewing the applications. Leona Dalton and Ellen Rivoir take the lead on organizing the annual “Walk for Homelessness”. Lorane Dray is their web-master and Myrna Howe serves as an integral role as a member of the MWOC Board of Directors. MWOC also has a great cadre of very committed volunteers who assist with this important work.

Len and Mike have worked to make a difference in the lives of so many of our fellow residents here in MetroWest and we are greatly honored to present them with this award.

Leona Dalton, of Southboro, has been a volunteer with MetroWest Harvest for 17 years. She initially transported pizza from two locations in Marlboro every week and delivered them to a shelter in Framingham. Over time, she asked for another “route,” and began picking up food from Trader Joes for about two years. For the past two years, she has transported large amount of ice cream, a very perishable product, from Breyer's in Framingham every week. Leona made up a schedule that insures a stop at every shelter in the area at least once a month. Not only is she reliable and dedicated, she is thoughtful with the distribution of this very popular donation!
SMOC Board of Directors

A thirty-member Board of Directors governs SMOC. The members are drawn from a broad cross section of the community, including both the public and private sectors in addition to individuals representing the recipients of our services. An eight-member Executive/Finance Committee appointed by the Board meets regularly between scheduled monthly Board meetings.

Bruce Hulme, President
Jeffrey Fishman, Vice President
Paul Prior, Treasurer
James Hanrahan, Clerk

Kim Battle, Rita Blum, Yvonne Brown, Ken Candito, Brian Chandley, Robert Clark, Larry Erickson, Patricia Greeley, Isabel Harrison, Ruth Hibbard, Hugo “Holly” Hollerorth, Larry Kaplan, Robert Kays, Dorothy Kennedy, Jose Lemos, Maria Martinez, Carl McCarthy, Ron Ordway, June Robertson, Larry Scult, Jim Shay, Pamula Zicko
SMOC’S VALUES

• Respect for the dignity & value of every individual.

SMOC respects the dignity and inherent value in all individuals. We relate to each other, to community partners, and to clients with respect, kindness, sincerity, and compassion.

• Appreciation for the value of diversity and an end to racism and discrimination.

SMOC embraces and values diversity. We strive to reflect the diversity of our clients and the communities we serve by providing employment, board, and volunteer opportunities. SMOC recognizes that racism is a critical barrier to social change and economic justice.

• Freedom from violence including domestic violence and sexual assault.

SMOC believes every person has a right to be free from violence, including domestic violence and sexual assault, and is entitled to safety in their own homes and neighborhoods.

• The right to housing and the abolishment of homelessness.

SMOC believes housing is a right, not a privilege and that homelessness should be abolished. Every person has a fundamental right to a decent, safe, healthy and stable home. We also believe that any person without a permanent, habitable housing situation is homeless.

• The right to health care.

SMOC believes health care is a right and not a privilege. Every person has a fundamental right to quality, affordable and accessible health care.
• Freedom from hunger.
  SMOC believes that hunger is an early warning signal of poverty and when food is so plentiful in the United States, everyone should have enough nutritious food to eat.

• The elimination of poverty.
  SMOC believes every person has a right to be free from poverty. SMOC believes that poverty reflects the declining number of jobs paying decent living wages, an increasingly inequitable distribution of wealth, continuing racial divisions and the absence of low-income people from the political resolution of the problem.

• The right to work for a living wage.
  SMOC supports the right of all people to work, be employed and earn a living wage.

• Easy access to social supports through co-location of social services.
  SMOC believes low-income and disadvantaged people are best served when services they rely on to meet complex human needs are integrated, concentrated, and co-located in their communities.

• SMOC’s Employees are its greatest strength.
  SMOC recognizes its employees are its most valuable asset and values their contribution to the success of its mission. We also help and encourage our employees to realize their potential, individually and as a team, and recognize that each and every one can and does make a difference.
Financial Information